Some Family Films Aren’t Appropriate for Families

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Some Family Films Aren’t Appropriate for Families

by Azure_K_Mello

Summary

Will’s problems with the Ripper worsen but he works through his issues. Drugs, kindness, talking can do much to help a wounded spirit. As people rally around him, Will sees the world isn’t a terrible place. But, monsters do live in the dark.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

The next few days were quiet, he didn't think even Jack had the gall to call him in. Besides, maybe the Ripper would back off if Jack wasn't exploiting Will. That was Will's thought. Whatever the case he could finally breathe out, without seeing crime scenes.

Hannibal sent out invitations to the party, in beautiful script. The message was simply, "Hannibal Lecter requests your presence at a dinner party honoring Will Graham on the occasion of birthday." It listed the date, Will's address, the dress code as being come as you are and no gifts. There was no request for an RSVP as Hannibal just expected people to come.

He and Hannibal spent a very quiet Saturday moving furniture. It was fun and easy and they made love in the new master bedroom. Afterwards, Hannibal said, "So what do you think, is it livable?"

Will laughed and pulled Hannibal close. The man wrapped around him and Will said, "I like it. It's much lighter than I thought. It's got a good view, I like it." They showered together in the upstairs' shower. It was a nicer shower. He washed the dogs' beds, and he and Hannibal took them for a long, long walk while the fabric dried. They went to the perimeter of the construction, careful to keep the dogs away. And looked at the progress.

On Sunday, they went to an auction where they talked to no one but Will bought a beautiful pale wood antique desk. Several people tried to talk to Hannibal. The rich were in fine attendance but Hannibal brushed them off politely and Will didn't have to interact.

Then, to Hannibal's obvious, if somewhat masked, distaste they went to IKEA where Will bought a pullout sofa bed. Will learned IKEA had a service you could pay for that assembled and delivered furniture. He needed to call his dad to authorize the purchase of the desk but the sofa was cheap, as IKEA stuff was want to be. Even with the assembly fee it wouldn't be questioned by the bank.

Will paid for it happily and said, "I might have dragged you to IKEA, but at least neither of us needs to say, 'Inte ens din mamma gillar dig.'"

That made Hannibal laugh and, when it and the desk came Monday afternoon, Hannibal made sure he was at the house so Will wouldn't have to panic about being in his own home with total strangers. Will was not there, he left Hannibal to deal with that and went to the construction. He sorted three wiring kits and counted out fifteen batches of fifty screws before heading home to see that Hannibal had gotten it all sorted out and had made a meat thing in aspic that was as delicious as it was confusing. All will could be certain of was that the meat was pork. What the vegetables were was anyone's guess. That said, it was tasty.

Will said, "Tomorrow I'll cook. You shouldn't have to cook every meal." They spent the evening picking which books Will wanted to be in his office and which he wanted downstairs. It cleaned out the downstairs shelves a lot, which was good as Abigail would have books that needed to be shelved.

Will tried to be happy, tried to put away his feelings about the copycat killer being the Ripper, but it was hard. Abigail came over for a dinner on Tuesday. Will made homemade lobster mac and cheese except in the place of macaroni he and Hannibal made homemade pasta together with Abigail. It was fun. The kitchen ended up being a mess of flour and all three of them were breathless with laughter. In those moments it was easy to forget the Ripper, BAU. It was just him and two people he loved. In the most horrible way possible the three of them became a family the day Will shot Hobbs.

And on Wednesday after a nice breakfast where Hannibal was talking about finalizing the menu for the dinner party, Georgetown University called to say they had a body. Will remained very calm when Jack called him and said, "Jack, please, take pictures. I can't force myself to look. Hannibal is throwing a big party Friday, my oldest friend is coming into town, he is coming to dinner tomorrow and I can't cope with a crime scene. I can work off pictures."

"Will, you're the leading expert on the Chesapeake Ripper."

Snappy, stressed Will said, "Shouldn't you be? You're the head of the BAU, Jack. You should be the leading expert. My degrees are in bugs and forensics. That's what I actually study: bugs and forensics. I am not a profiler. I'm a scientist. I'll do pictures; I can't do a scene, not this side of the weekend. I'm just not up to it."

There was a long silence. Will waited to be fired. He waited to be shouted at. Instead there was a click and he went back to his monograph. He wished his appointment with Mort wasn't a week away but then again, he didn't know what he would say.

He would beg for more exercises, some drugs but he didn't want to try and express his feelings. He remembered, during that short time when Hannibal had tried to be his psychiatrist, when the good doctor had asked how something had made Will feel. Irritated and threatened, Will had parroted the question back at him.

With his options limited and he texted Mort, "Breathing isn't working. I need an anxiety drug. It's been brutal on and off. I'm being affected more and more by the Ripper. I'm panicking over even looking at pictures. I'm not usually a drug seeker but chemicals can help. My resting pulse is seventy-five. It keeps spiking to one-ten. I'm asking for emergency drugs, not a daily prescription. I have to look at his pictures soon."

The message came back moments later. "I'll call it in to the pharmacy near Quantico but I want a meeting with you tonight. If I'm giving you drugs, we need to talk about symptoms. We can meet at my house as it's closer. 5:30?"

Will texted back, "Yes, thank you."

"Your prescription will be ready in twenty minutes. Please keep breathing, even if it doesn't feel like it's helping."

"Thank you," Will texted back. Then he texted Hannibal. "Ripper messed up my day. I have an emergency appointment with Mort after work. He won't give me an anxiety drug without meeting me and I need drugs."

Hannibal texted back, writing, “After you said that part of the Ripper’s motivation to hate Jack is his exploitation of others, Jack’s still exploiting you?”

Reading it, Will gave a broken laugh. He knew Jack was on the side of the angels but he would never be a creature of light. His life was so murky and dark, Will wondered if Jack really understood the difference between what was legal and what was right.

Before he could reply, Hannibal sent another text, “It’s my late night but I’ll come home to you. I’m sorry, Will, I wish this were easier.”

Will thought about disagreeing, telling Hannibal he would be fine but instead he found his fingers typing, “Thank you.” Before his class, he went home for his car, then to the pharmacy then drove back to school having dry swallowed a pill. It was Xanax, he should have specifically asked for Klonopin.

Xanax was a weird drug. He knew it affected people differently. People had said in the past that it didn’t make them drugged, it just made them feel normal. For Will, the sudation was pronounced. He wondered if this level of calm was normal for most people. Maybe this was “normal” for other people. If so, he really envied them. He also recognized that he was stoned, most people — to his knowledge — didn’t get stoned on a correct dosage of Xanax. He taught his class feeling calm. His words perfectly filled his allotted time.

When he was done, he went to his office did his lunchtime breathing and ate a sandwich he’d brought from home. He was technically done for the day but he didn’t want to have to come back if Jack did want him to look at pictures. The Xanax made him feel weird. He should have made sure it was Klonopin. He texted Beverly, “Is he going to make me look at pictures or can I go home? I want to go home.”

“Don’t go home,” she texted back, “he’s going to want you.”

He worked on his monograph. Then he did research about what type of laptop to buy for his home office. He only wanted something cheap: a word processor and the internet for research. He would be fine with it having no speakers or whatever it was that made computers expensive. Having never owned a computer, he wasn’t sure what the expensive parts were. After an hour and only three paragraphs of his monographs his phone rang and Will saw Jack’s number. Answering it he said, “Are you in the lab?”

“Yeah, we just got back,” the man started. The way he breathed showed Will that he intended to keep talking.

Not wanting Jack to continue, Will said, “I’ll come over now.” He hung up before Jack could reply. After a deep, long exhale and inhale, Will put on his suit jacket. He wanted to go in fully clothed.

He walked to the lab and, once there, Jack examined his face and said, “Are you high?”

“No, I’m low,” said Will, then gave a laugh that sounded wrong to his own ears. “It’s a high dose of Xanax.”

“I can’t use the testimony of a man who is on drugs,” said Jack.

“Well, you aren’t getting my opinion without drugs in my system,” said Will, irritated.

“Fear makes you rude, Will,” said Jack. He’d said it before.

Shrugging, Will said, “You’re the one who keeps scaring me. I don’t know what you want.”

“Xanax doesn’t get you high, Will,” said Jimmy, trying to meet his eyes. “Your pupils are dilated.”

“My brain is wired differently,” said Will, studiously looking away. “I’m stoned but I’m fine. Should have asked for Klonopin. Let me see the pictures.”

Jack put them up on screens and Will looked, without looking, he saw without seeing, he spoke without listening. Then it struck him: the woman had been strung up by the feet she’d been slit down the center and left to bleed out, like a deer. There was a skunk tail coming out of her chest and a rabbit pelt shoved in her mouth.

Looking at it, Will started to laugh. The others look shocked at his laughter. “The flower man destroyed nature; the monk was a pedophile; this doe was a mother… must have been a bad one, or the Ripper thought she was.”

“What?” asked Beverly.

“She’s Bambi’s mom and she’s got Flower and Thumper with her,” he started laughing again. It was horror and revulsion that came out in the worst way possible. “She’s a bad mom… that’s a horrible movie. I wonder if all of his kills were bad people or if he just thought they were. How do you quantify a bad mom?” Looking at his watch he said, “I need to go. My doctor would only give me Xanax if I agreed to meet him.”

“Are you okay to drive?” asked Zeller.

Will nodded, “It’s five miles and my motor skills are fine.”

“You sure?” asked Zeller.

“I don’t want to be trapped in a small place with someone else.” Will left without another word. His driving to Mort’s wasn’t his best performance bur he made it there alive. There he knocked on the door and he heard barking.

“Holly, Bub, down,” said Mort’s voice. He opened the door and said, “Hi, Will, this is Bub. Bub is trustworthy and can stay home alone.”

Will crouched to pet both dogs, “Meeting a new dog was exactly what I needed today. Hi, Bub, nice to meet you. Holly, a pleasure as always.” Holly licked his face. “Good, girl.”

He straightened and Mort looked at him, “Will, you stoned?”

“Little bit,” Will held his thumb and forefinger sort of close together. “Xanax is really effective.”

“Did you take two?” asked Mort.

“No, my body just really responds,” Will was a little uneven as he stood. A woman came up behind Mort and Will felt his eyes go wide and looked away.

“Will, my wife Donna. Donna, this is Will, Hannibal Lecter’s boyfriend. He doesn’t like shaking hands and I’ve accidentally gotten him stoned with a slightly high dose of Xanax. Will, let’s get you a cup of coffee. Maybe an upper will counteract this a little bit. No grapefruit for at least twenty-four hours, okay?” Will nodded and followed Mort into the kitchen where the man started to make coffee. Donna followed too and Mort said, “Donna, gorgeous, Will and I are going to go into my office.”

She looked surprised and Will realized that she didn’t know. “I’m not just Hannibal’s boyfriend who needed an anxiety drug. I’m a patient. But you don’t need to be worried that I know your address. Hannibal introduced us. I’m a dog enthusiast who lives here in Wolf Creek. I work for the FBI, I teach and I consult on ritualistic crimes. As you can probably imagine, I’m dealing with work stress. Mort’s helping me breathe.”

“Will’s not crazy,” Mort said. “Meeting here means I get home at a good hour and Will doesn’t have to go to Baltimore. If he were to ever commit a crime, it would be dognapping.”

“Holly’s beautiful but I can’t have a high maintenance dog. Holly can’t be left alone. Bub, on the other hand, is also good looking and could join the gang: I own seven dogs.”

“Will, that doesn’t make you sound sane,” said Mort. He poured them each coffee. “Donna, as Will is a patient, we’re going to need privacy.”

“Okay, but do you want a snack?” she asked.

“I’m fine, thank you,” said Will.

“We’re fine, gorgeous,” said Mort and he nodded toward a hallway. “Let’s talk a little, Will.”

Will followed him, carrying his coffee into a nice office. It was comfortable and small but not cramped. There wasn’t a couch, just armchairs. With no way to curl up next to him, Holly settled on his feet. Bub sniffed him and then decided that he would prefer to be at his master’s side. “It’s been a rough week, my oldest friend is coming into town tomorrow, Friday is my birthday and the Ripper is making jokes.”

“Jokes?”

“A pedophile emasculated at a monastery, a mother turned into Bambi’s mom,” Will breathed out hard.

“Wow, no wonder you needed a little Xanax,” said Mort.

“I should have specifically asked for Klonopin. It doesn’t get me high,” Will breathed out hard through his nose. “I don’t like talking about my feelings, Mort.”

“I know, I know, let’s talk about your breathing. I’m sorry that I messed up your drugs. I should have asked.” Will took his journal out of his briefcase. “Nice.”

“You told me to use one I liked,” said Will. He opened it and held it out to Mort, he started explaining his notes as the man looked at his angular, neat handwriting.

When he was done, Mort said, “This is great work, Will. In your everyday life, strip out the Ripper, how have these been working?”

“Well, really well,” said Will.

“Then I think you’re okay. Drugs aren’t shameful: they have a role in medicine. I know you don’t like them but, as an emergency crutch, they work. But, I’m going to trade them out for Klonopin. What’s a good dose for you? You know your body, I don’t.”

“Point one-two-five of the wafer, please.”

“That low of a dose?” asked Mort.

Will nodded, “It works.”

“Your insurance isn’t going to cover it,” he said.

“That’s okay. Don’t worry about the cost,” said Will. “Will a pharmacy fill it?”

“I’ll call and explain it to the pharmacist.” Will’s phone rang. “That’ll be your dad; I emailed him about the Xanax, but, once you’re done talking to him, I’ll update him. You take that, I’ll call the pharmacy from the kitchen.”

Mort shut the door behind himself and Will answered the phone. “Hey Daddy.”

“Hey, honey. Are you okay? Mort emailed and said he was giving you Xanax. You don’t do well on Xanax.”

“I know, I should have been more specific when I asked for an antianxiety drug. But I was stressed out. I’m at his house now, he wanted to see me. I’m a little stoned. He’s swapping it out for Klonopin.”

“Did you tell him that you need a really low dose?” asked his dad.

“Point one-two-five of the wafers,” said Will.

“Good, what’s going on?”

“The Ripper turned a woman into Bambi’s mother: gutted her like a deer and stuffed a skunk and rabbit into her. I didn’t go to the scene. But even looking at the pictures… Hannibal is coming home tonight even though it’s his late night. I’m okay, Daddy.” His dad sighed

heavily. “I’m serious, Daddy, I’m not good but I’m okay. I have a nice doctor with his finger on the pulse, I have nice friends and a good boyfriend and coping mechanisms I didn’t have last time. Even Zeller is trying. He offered to drive me here. People are trying to help. People care about me.”

“Do you want me to come?” offered his dad. “I can be on the next plane, honey.”

“I’m okay, Daddy. Not great but fine. I love my dogs, my boyfriend, my friends, my house, my land. I like my job when I’m not in the field. I like my life. I’m okay.” Mort came in and Will said. “Do you want to talk to Mort he can tell you if I’m okay or not?”

“Yes,” said his dad, emphatically.

Will held out the phone, “My dad is worried.”

Mort took it and said, “Do I have your permission?” Will nodded and Mort put the phone to his face. “Mr. Graham, this is Mort Jacobs, how are you?” He listened for a few moments and said, “He’s okay… no, he is not a suicide risk, he’s okay… That’s a good point.” Redirecting his gaze, Mort asked, “Will, how far away do you live?”

“It’s about half a mile,” said Will.

“I’m going to walk you home,” Mort said firmly. “Then I’ll go exchange your meds and drop them at your house. Okay?”

Will nodded and said, “Would you come inside with me for a moment so I can just do a quick house check?”

“Sure, Will, I can do that.” Mort nodded. Into the phone he said, “I’m going to walk Will home and go inside while he searches for intruders. Then I’m going to drive over to the pharmacy and exchange his Xanax for Klonopin. I apologized to Will for prescribing Xanax, I apologize to you too. I should have discussed the type of drug with Will. We were texting. Does that answer all of your questions?” he listened for a moment and said, “Yes, here he is.” He held out the phone to Will.

Will took it and said, “See, you don’t need to come up. Besides, JT is flying in tomorrow and, the next day, Hannibal is cooking dinner for my birthday. Okay?”

“Okay, but, you promise you’ll call if you need me?”

“Course, Daddy.”

“And I’ll call you Friday for your birthday. Love you, boy,” he said.

Will smiled into the phone, “Love you too, Daddy.” He hung up and said, “Thank you.” Mort nodded.

“I want to try some new breathing exercises, more complicated. I don’t know if you’re ready for them. They’re for people who are experienced with meditation. But you’ve been at this for a little while so maybe you can at least start to learn.” They spent forty minutes learning

the new, much more complicated exercises. Will took notes in his journal while Mort promised that his progress was good.

When it was time to go, Will said, “I’m calm enough, and stoned enough, you can drive. I didn’t block you in.”

“You’re sure?” asked Mort.

Will nodded, “Yeah, I’ll be fine.”

Mort explained the situation to his wife and Will said goodnight to her. In the car he said, “Thank you, Mort. This is really above and beyond.”

“That’s okay, Will. We knew going in that they would be rough moments. Everything is fine.” They pulled up and he said, “That’s a beautiful house, Will.”

“Thank you. My dad helped me fix it up.” When he opened the door, his boys came out. Sniffing Mort, interested. “These are my boys.”

“They’re as beautiful as the house.” Mort patted them all before they went off to do their business.

“We can leave them out here with the screen closed, they aren’t wanderers,” Will went up the porch steps with Mort following him. He went from room to room, turning on all the lights, searching, double checking, and giving Mort a tour. “On Saturday I’m going to freshen up the wood floors down here. The dogs scratch them up. As Hannibal is throwing the party Friday, I put doing the floors off.”

“Are you going to be okay with the party?” asked Mort.

“I’ll breathe through the first five minutes and then enjoy the rest of it,” said Will. He finished searching and said, “Okay, there’s no one here.”

“Good,” said Mort. “Where’s that Xanax? I’ll go to the pharmacy and trade them out.” Will took it out of his briefcase.

“They have my insurance. But it won’t cover it.” said Will taking his credit card out of his wallet.

Mort shook his head, “Any difference in price will be negligible as I’m exchanging it. I don’t need your card.”

Will followed him out the door and sat on the steps of his porch, stroking the dogs as they came to him. Harry put his paws on Will’s knees and whined. Once, he would have just jumped into his lap, now that he was aging, he sought assistance. Will lifted him into his lap and cuddled him. Harry licked his face. Maybe he was licking Holly’s scent over his face; maybe it was just comfort. Will sat there for over a half hour before they got tired. Inside, he thawed out gumbo and, when Mort came back Will said, “Do you want gumbo?”

Mort smiled, “That’s polite of you but you’re not comfortable with me in your house. As long as you’re comfortable being left alone,” Will nodded, “then I’m going to go.” Holding out the bottle of pills, Mort said, “Take as needed, no more than one every twelve hours. Don’t take anything until the morning.”

“Thank you, Mort,” said Will.

“I’m sorry about the Xanax,” said Mort.

“It’s fine, thank you for helping me,” said Will. He showed Mort out and then locked the doors. He ate his gumbo at the table with the dogs milling in and out of the room. He tied flies on the living room floor until half past midnight when Hannibal walked in.

Hannibal looked at him and said, “Did you wait up for me or?” he let his words trail off, keeping it an open ended question.

“My face tingles but I’m not as stoned as I was. I wasn’t too scared to sleep but I really wanted to see your face in a well-lit room before you climbed into bed with me. Someone climbing into bed with me in the dark would not help me sleep tonight, even knowing it was you.” He stood and hugged the man.

“Two separate dogs have licked your face,” said Hannibal. “So unhygienic.” He didn’t pull away, despite his words.

“Sorry, Holly is friendly and Harry knew I wasn’t right and he was being comforting.”

With a nod, Hannibal said, “Dogs can smell chemical changes. He truly does know you’ve had a hard day.” He rubbed Will’s back. “What do you want?”

“You just drove all the way here for me, Hannibal, do you want coffee?” asked Will.

“Will, I had coffee before I got in the car. What do you want? I came here to help you. I just want to help; I have no motive.”

Nodding, Will said, “Can we just go to bed and cuddle, would that be okay?”

“Of course, but I must insist: wash your face. I want to curl up with you but not Holly and Harry’s saliva.”

Will nodded. Locking the door he said, “Can you please check the back door while I go wash my face?” Hannibal gave a small nod.

Upstairs, Will stripped and washed his face, neck and his hands. Hannibal came to him and sniffed, “Thank you, Will.” He kissed his neck, “Much better.” The dogs had taken to sleeping on the landing and Hannibal said, “If I leave the door open, will they stay on the floor or get up on the bed?”

“I can tell me to sleep on the floor,” said Will. “They’re good boys.” Calvin was looking at him from the doorway, not entering until he was welcomed. “Cal,” he pointed to one spot on the floor and Calvin came in wagging his tail. The dogs knew that Hannibal being home

meant they weren't welcome in the bedroom. All the dogs followed, making themselves comfortable.

"Better?" asked Hannibal.

"Significantly," said Will. He turned off the bathroom light and walked into the bedroom that was only lit by one bedside table. They settled into bed and Will breathed in evaluating. "I'm okay. You can turn off the light."

Hannibal did as asked and wrapped an arm around his waist, "Good?"

"Perfect," Will said. He did his slow bedtime breathing and said, "I got accidentally high, the Ripper is making jokes, but Hannibal drove far too long just to share the bed."

"I'd drive anywhere for you. I just wish you found the joke — whatever it was — funny and not horrific."

"No one would find that funny," said Will and Hannibal's arm tightened comfortingly around him.

End Notes

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